



## ***Key Tips for Hiring a Contractor***

Hiring a contractor is a critical aspect in the home construction or improvement process. While most contractors provide professional and reliable services, the Development Services Department would like to offer some key tips in finding and hiring a contractor for a project to help avoid unfortunate circumstances.

When looking to hire a contractor, the community is encouraged to first contact the Development Services Department at **(915) 541-4558** to see if a contractor is registered with the City. All contractors are required to have current licenses, bonds and insurance in order to be registered with the City. *Keep in mind: If a homeowner is being asked by a contractor to seek a permit themselves or is told the price of the permit is less expensive if requested by a homeowner, it is possible the contractor is not registered with the City.*

Additionally, asking family, friends or neighbors if they have ever worked with the contractor considered may be helpful. The public can also inquire with the Better Business Bureau to view available contractor ratings and any recorded complaints. *Keep in mind: The Better Business Bureau website is [elpaso.bbb.org](http://elpaso.bbb.org) or phone number (915) 577-0191.*

It is also important to request at least three bids from different contractors for comparison purposes and to schedule an in-person interview. Identifying how long a contractor has been in business is often a good indicator of an established reputation.

Lastly, every agreement should be made in writing. The contractor's information should be found on the contract along with the full scope of work, description of all items to be installed, a cancellation clause, a work schedule with start and completion dates and a payment schedule. Warranties should be present on the contract, and written warranties from the manufacturers of products being installed should also be requested. Periodic or partial payments as work progresses instead of complete payment up front are recommended.

### **Quick Checklist**

- ✓ Check a contractor's registration with the Development Services Department by calling **(915) 541-4558**
- ✓ Check a contractor's file with the Better Business Bureau at [elpaso.bbb.org](http://elpaso.bbb.org) or by calling **(915) 577-0191**
- ✓ Interview the contractor in person and request references
- ✓ Make sure the written contract is understood completely before signing
- ✓ Do not make the final payment until the final inspection is approved and satisfaction is achieved

**For more information, the public can contact the Development Services Department at 541-4622 or visit [www.elpasotexas.gov/development\\_services/](http://www.elpasotexas.gov/development_services/)**

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